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THE STORY OF DATTO PATA MATA.¹

(CHIEF FOUR-EYES.)

A GREAT many years ago there lived a datto,² at his village of Boyan on the banks of the Pulangui.³ This datto had four eyes, two in front where every one has his eyes, and two in the back of his head.

The eyes in front would sleep for a week, and then the eyes in the back of his head for a week, alternating. While one pair was awake the other pair would sleep.

This datto's name was Pata Mata, meaning four eyes, and he was very wicked, for he stole all the beautiful "lagas" (maidens) and put them in his harem. When there were no more maidens to be found, even little girls, old women, and the wives of his brother dattos he took by force, for Pata Mata was very rich and powerful, and his captives were never allowed to leave his house after they once entered it.

Before long the maidens and women began to be very scarce in the land, and all the other dattos held a "vitchiara" (council) to see what could be done, for the young men were growing up and there were no wives for them.

After much "talutalu" (argument) a brother of the four-eyed datto spoke up, and said that he had thought of a plan whereby their wives and daughters might be restored to them. He told the council his scheme, which pleased them, and he was authorized to carry it out.

So one dark and stormy day in the time of the big rains and big waters, the good brother said to the "four-eyed," "Look, brother! look how black, angry, and fierce is the 'langit' (sky). Surely it will soon fall upon us and we shall all be killed."

This made Pata Mata very much afraid, and the good brother suggested that they build a house in the shape of a ball, build it ever so strong, so that even if the sky did fall upon the house it would not be crushed.

So they called in many slaves and workmen, and built a house in the form of a ball; when it was finished the good brother said,

¹ This is a legend of the Mohammedan tribes, or Moros, of Mindanao, P. I., in the valley of the Rio Grande de Mindanao, first translated out of the original tongue by Major Ralph S. Porter, Surgeon U. S. V.

² Datto, meaning chief, a title of authority, is applied to principal men, chiefs, and rulers among the Moros.

³ Pulangui means "great river."

"Now let us test the house and see if it is strong enough ; let us call many of our people and see if they can break it."

Then the people were called, and they tried their strength on it, and the strength of their "carabaos" (water buffalo). They all tugged and pulled with all their might and main, and at last the house cracked.

Now the work had to be all done over again, and the house was built ten times as strong as the first one, and when it was finished the people were called again, and all the strength of all the people and all the carabaos could not break the ball house.

Then the four-eyed datto said, "Now that the house is finished, I will go in it and be perfectly safe even though the sky break and fall."

As soon as he stepped in the good brother clapped the door shut, braced and barred and tied it tight, and then he said, "Brother of the four-eyes, you have been very bad, and now 'Allahtala' (God) will take care of your punishment."

Now when the other dattos learned that Chief-Four Eyes was safely fastened in the ball house, they gave orders that it should be rolled down to the river Pulangui and heaved in.

When this was done the currents and tides carried it up and down the river as a warning to all.

The brother had put plenty of rice in the house, and so Pata Mata always had enough to eat, and did not die for many years.

Whenever the ball house would float past a house on the banks of the river, or pass an "auang" (boat or canoe) in the river, Pata Mata would cry out to be released and would offer gold, pearls, slaves, and carabaos, if they would only let him out.

But no one would open the door, for the dattos had given orders that whoever helped Pata Mata to get out of the house would be beheaded.

As soon as the four-eyed datto had been put in the ball house, all the wives and daughters he had stolen returned to their parents and husbands, and there was great rejoicing in the land, lantakas (cannon) were fired, and the price of cocoanuts reduced to one half, which is the custom on joyful occasions.

After many years the datto of the four-eyes died, and the ball house was opened. Then it was found that all of his body was dead except the jaws ; and so the jaws were cut off from the body and placed in a fine mahogany (comagon) box. And the body given a stately burial¹ as became a datto of his high rank.

¹ Burial customs of the Moros: The body is wrapped in as many yards of fine cloth as can be afforded by the family and friends and is lowered into the grave

The jaws continued to live, and a roll of "mbama" (a little package of bongo nut, bulla leaf, lime, and tobacco, the regular "chew" of the Moro) was put between the jaws and the box closed. When it was opened the next day this "mbama" was found to be all chewed up finely.

Even to this day the jaws are regularly fed by the concubines of Datto Uttu, who is a descendant of the old four-eyed datto.

Ralph S. Porter, U. S. V.

(about four feet deep) by means of a mat and a board laid over it lengthwise, the head toward the setting sun.

Portions of the Koran are read by the panditas (priests) and then the body covered with rocks and dirt, and if it is a datto, a lantaka (cannon) is used as a head-stone. A fence covered with white cloth is built around the grave and at each corner is an umbrella of white cloth. A datto is allowed to have six umbrellas over his grave.

For three nights thereafter the friends of the deceased sleep at the grave, the purpose being to guard the departed from evil spirits.